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## Joint statement

21 January 2022

# Rapid antigen testing in education and care settings

Community Child Care Association (CCC), Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) and Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) believe that a higher level of rapid antigen testing is required in education and care settings, in light of the federal government's decision to make educators exempt from household isolation requirements. We recommend that daily rapid antigen tests should occur for five consecutive days where there is a positive case in a service or/and staff members who are household contacts return to work. In addition, as an ongoing temporary operational requirement, we recommend that all staff and children over two years of age should test twice a week.

This level of vigilance is required as a minimum because:

- Early education is known to be a high transmission setting
- Children in early education settings are not vaccinated and it is in the interest of their safety that a higher level of vigilance is applied
- Positive cases will be identified quickly which will have a flow-on effect to workforce preservation and confidence across early education teams
- Regular testing provides reassurance for parents that protocols are in place, which will have a flow-on effect to reducing parental anxiety and preserving attendance
- Regular testing reduces the impact of false-negative results.

Rapid antigen tests should be free and supply assured to all education and care services prior to any change in return-to-work policy for this sector.

**For more information or to arrange an interview with CCC Executive Director Julie Price, contact Daniela Kavoukas on 0488 300 911**



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